

NightwingBuffy: Children of the Night

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Summary: Bludhaven is held paralyzed by a series of vicious murders.

NightwingBuffy: Children of the Night

Author's Note: This is dedicated to Cagewench, a fellow Slayer-phile.:)

Summary: A Bludhaven fraternity house is the latest target of a serial mass murderer. Can Nightwing stop the inhuman killer or killers? And who is this young girl with a punch like titanium steel? [This is my first attempt at a crossover. Be kind.:)]

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Nightwing/Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Children of the Night By Syl Francis

'Tis now the very witching time of night, When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out Contagion to this world. (Hamlet III, 2)

I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw what was left of the Alpha Delta Rho fraternity brothers, so imagine how I felt now. I was standing in the old, abandoned remains of St. Ignatius. It had burned down almost ten years ago, and the Church fathers had declined to

restore it. All that remained was an empty shell.

Much like Bludhaven's soul.

The first clue was the deliberate sign of blasphemy: an upside down crucifix.

I'd found their lair.

My stomach churned at the smell of rotting flesh and human excrement. At the vulgar graffiti scrawled on the walls. I looked closer. The newer ones hadn't been spray-painted. Or rather, they hadn't used paint.

They'd splattered their profanities with blood.

Probably their latest victim's. The utter viciousness of the killers had Bludhaven paralyzed. As a result, the mayor imposed a citywide curfew two days ago. No one was allowed out in the streets after 6:00 pm. Period. No exceptions. This made patrolling the streets much easier, but it even had me jumping at shadows.

The newspapers reported an increase in the sale of crucifixes, holy water, and garlic. I'd scoffed at this a few days ago. "And here I'd thought that only criminals were a cowardly and superstitious lot," I'd said to Oracle. But now? I wasn't laughing anymore.

The bundle of rags tossed carelessly against a corner began to stir and moan. I moved quickly to the victim's side and gave him a perfunctory examination. Puncture wounds on the neck, similar to the previous victims', but still breathing. Barely. Some poor homeless guy, probably.

"Buddy, you picked the wrong spot to sleep it off," I murmured. I had to get him out of there. I slung him over my shoulder and began making my way back to the entrance.

These killers, whoever they were, didn't believe in subtlety. Or in keeping a low profile. Since hitting Bludhaven, whoever these fiends were, they'd been responsible for no less than forty murders.

The same night as the fraternity house slayings, they'd killed almost the entire clientele of a teen nightclub. The next night, they hit a local high school that had an evening concert. Almost the entire school choir had been murdered. The blood completely drained from the corpses.

After a third night of these brutal, senseless murders, the Mayor and City Council took action and declared a state of emergency. The governor agreed to call out the National Guard to assist as necessary. The FBI was also on the case.

The JLA and the Titans offered their assistance, not to mention Batman. But, I'm a little superstitious myself. Once I invited them in, I *knew* they'd just keep coming back. And Bludhaven is *my* town. So, I firmly, but politely asked them all to "Stay out!"

Of course, you don't get away with telling Superman (or Batman!) to go fly a kite, unless you produce results. I think my time was quickly running out. I could almost *feel* the JLA monitors breathing

down my neck. And, object of my affections or not, I knew that Oracle was keeping Batman apprised of my progress. Or, in this case, my *lack* thereof.

But, never fear! I'd found their lair! Unfortunately, they found me, too!

I was forced to put down the guy that I'd been about to rescue. I told myself that this would be a cinch. After all, there were only two of them. Any superhero worth his or her salt could've handled them. Even Flamebird.

Before I knew it, they were kicking my butt pretty thoroughly. I found myself fighting in a haze of adrenaline. First one then the other would come at me. I had no time to rest between bouts. And they didn't even appear winded. I realized that they were toying with me.

"Dillon, don't you just love it when they fight?" one asked as he casually punched me with enough force to slam me through the abandoned cathedral's sacristy wall.

I smashed through the old brick and mortar, and went flying backwards into the alley below. As I fell, I released a grappling hook from its hidden recess in my gauntlet and shot out a safety line in time to save myself a terrible headache. To my shock, they were waiting for me at the bottom when I landed.

"Yeah, Joey! It sure makes the pleasure of the kill so much more...fulfilling."

They laughed, a bone-chilling sound that felt as if someone was walking on my grave. Which considering the circumstances pretty much described the situation.

I immediately did a reverse somersault, thus avoiding another earthquake blow to my body. As I leaped out of harm's way, I caught sight of their teeth...I shuddered inwardly, but it only strengthened my resolve. I turned at the last moment and attacked, kicking out simultaneously with both legs.

I connected with a satisfying, bone-crunching force. They each shrugged off my best effort as if I were a mere annoyance. Narrowing my eyes, I readied two special Batarangs. Before I could react, they were gone!

One second they were in front of me, the next--gone! Disappeared! The hairs on the back of my neck prickled. I felt a light tap on my shoulder.

I dove forward and rolled several times. As I came up, I released the Batarangs.

Too late! They were gone. Again.

I stood alone in the dim light of the quarter moon. I heard the Batarangs finally hit somewhere in the distance. I'd have to remember to recover them. They were the latest design in Batman's arsenal of non-lethal defensive weapons. Non-lethal did not equate to non-painful, however. Wouldn't do for an innocent passerby to pick

one up.

These thoughts flashed through my mind as I made my way stealthily through the darkened alley. The softest sound behind me provided just enough warning to duck from the first one's grip.

The second one, Joey, I think, lifted me as easily as a kitten and threw me towards a row of garbage cans. I hastily righted myself and managed to land in a defensive crouch. I held my escrima sticks at ready.

"Ho-ho!" Dillon mocked. "The boy has da moves! But get a load of the sticks!"

For some reason this brought them undue merriment. "He expects to hurt us with *those*?"

"Yeah, pretty funny, Dillon. I think he's one of the ones the Master warned us about. You know, do-gooder."

"A superhero? Hey, one of the major food groups!"

Breaking into good-natured laughter again, they high-fived each other, and began moving in.

I was about at the end of my rope. You know, exhausted, at the point of collapse. I'd been at it with these monsters for what seemed like hours now. I'd taken on all of the inmates at Blackgate Prison once, and I hadn't felt this worn out.

I was holding on with whatever will power I could muster. I'd seen what they'd done to the occupants of an entire frat house. I'd seen the haunted eyes of the parents of the high school choir. I'd witnessed the aftermath at the teen nightclub.

I knew that I'd have nightmares for years to come from this case. I knew that I couldn't let them get away and do it somewhere else.

As they advanced, I saw that they were both grinning. Moonlight glinted off their fangs. Yeah, you heard me...fangs.

These guys were *monsters*! Literally! The meanest, ugliest, deadeast...did I mention they were dead?...creatures I'd ever encountered. Even the loser dead mobsters who'd risen from their graves during the recent, so-called Day of Judgment hadn't struck this kind of weak-kneed terror in me.

Vampires...! The word sent a chill down my spine. This was a little out of my league. I mean, maybe when I was kid I *did* hang out with a guy who dressed up like a bat, but no matter what you might've heard, there was nothing supernatural about Batman.

When you're a kid from Gotham City, you grow tough! You learn to take it. I admit that I'd dealt with a lot of strange phenomena growing up, seen my share of X-Files stuff, but vampires--?

That's when something *really* strange happened. Something or someone told me to stand still. And just like that, I couldn't move. Not a twitch. Not a muscle.

"Aw, Joey," Dillon whined. "Why did you have to go and put the whammy on him for? Things was just getting interesting."

"Shut up, Dill," Joey growled. "Being dead hasn't made you any smarter, you know that?" Dillon just stared at Joey in abject hurt. "It's almost dawn, you idiot."

"Oh." Dillon stepped aside, and suddenly Joey stood in front of me, his eyes glowing, as if possessed by a demon.

"I think that you're going to be the best of this whole night. The other one...he'd been drinking some kind of cheap wine. Left a bitter after taste. But you--" He studied me hungrily, looking me up and down. If I hadn't been so gut-twisted, frightened half out of my wits, I would've blushed.

Anyway, I couldn't move. I just stood there waiting to become this dead guy's midnight snack. What's worse, I **wanted** it (I know, ewwww!)--mind control, I was told later--when this human dynamo appeared out of nowhere!

"The Slayer!" Dillon shouted in warning.

She came in kicking, punching, and spewing puns that were even worse than mine: "Here, bite **this**!"

Through my blurring vision I swear I saw her stab Dillon through the heart with a...get this!...a wooden stake! At that point, I'd thought I'd seen it all, but no, there was one more thing. As soon as she drove the stake through his chest, the guy went ~poof~ and disintegrated into a nasty-smelling cloud of dust.

By then Joey had gone into action. He sprang (~flew~?) at the girl and they both went tumbling across the alley floor. When Joey stopped looking at me, I snapped out of whatever fugue I'd fallen into and instantly went to lend a hand.

I needn't have bothered. The girl and Joey were about an arm's length apart, crouched, ready to spring, when she suddenly fainted left. Joey fell for it.

The girl gave him a look a look of triumph, "Say, hi, to Mister Pointy!" and she drove the stake through him. I stood rooted to my spot, shaking my head. I still couldn't believe what I'd witnessed that night.

She turned to me. Then, almost mirroring Joey's look when he'd studied me (this time I **did** blush), she smiled. "Nice tights." She frowned. "Fight monsters much?"

I shook my head 'no.'

"Do you?" I asked.

She crossed her arms and began pacing. I noted that she kept her stake handy. She also never took her eyes off me, making sure I was always in her line of vision.

"What's your name?" I asked. I didn't really expect an answer, so I was surprised when she gave me one.

"Buffy."

Yeah, right, I thought. "Pleased to you make your acquaintance, 'Buffy'," I said.

"And I'm pleased to make *your* acquaintance, Gorgeous Masked Guy in Black Tights with Blue Thingie Across His Chest," she responded without batting an eyelid.

I blushed--*again! "Um, call me Nightwing."

"Oh, secret identify stuff. Cool. I used to have a secret identity," she said half to herself. "Well, not really a secret, I mean everybody knew what I did...well, maybe not everybody, but it sometimes seemed like everybody knew. And when my mother found out--" She stopped suddenly and looked at me, stricken. "--And I'm babbling, right? Buffy, no babbling...big turn-off..." She stopped, or rather she ran out of steam.

"Is this what you used to do?" I asked. "Fight monsters?"

She nodded a bit reluctantly. "Yeah," she admitted.

"Why?"

She shrugged. "'Cause I'm the Chosen...the Slayer."

I must've given her a blank look.

"Long story," she said, sidestepping the issue. "Look, it's been a long night. You know any decent, i.e., *cheap* hotel? I'd like to crash before I head back home."

"Where's home?"

"Sunnydale, California. I've been tracking these two for almost three weeks now. They wiped out a sorority house back home, moved north to San Francisco and took out a nurses' dormitory. They've pretty much been responsible for the greater part of the latest blood draining, neck sucking murder-spree across the U.S."

I'd heard of the string of horrific nation-wide serial killings that had been plaguing the country for the past few weeks. When I originally heard the radio call over the Bludhaven Police band on the attack at the Fraternity house, I'd feared the worst.

My fears weren't unfounded.

"You mean all of these murders have been committed by only these two?" I pointed at the empty air.

"Yep. Real go-getters our two boys." She sounded very matter-of-fact, as if vampire killers were an everyday occurrence to her. "They were sired less than four weeks ago, and have been committing murder and mayhem ever since. 'Pillaging' should come in there somewhere, but I'm not exactly sure where. Willow would be able to tell you, though."

I blinked at the gibberish.

"Willow? Sired?" I asked.

"No, um, not 'Willow' sired, but instead, um, Sired--verb--as in were created...were born...came to be..." she explained in her odd manner.

"Does everyone from California talk like you?"

"Like what?"

I shook my head.

"Never mind," I said, trying to get the conversation back to something that made sense. "I don't understand. You say that Joey and Dillon had only been vampires for four weeks?"

"How did you know their names?" her voice had turned suddenly cold. I stopped, confused and stared at her. She sure had a knack for saying or concentrating on the oddest things.

"That's what they called themselves."

She sighed and nodded. "Dumb jocks when they were alive. Dumb jocks after they died. Why would anyone expect them to change?"

"I don't understand," I repeated. I was beginning to sound like a stuck record.

"If you know their names, then you can track them to their place of origin. If you can do that, then you could, in theory, track down the vampire who sired them. If you can do that, then you could possibly be ridding the world of...a lot of trouble."

I blinked. I'd expected her to say something a bit more portentous than 'a lot of trouble,' but she was reminding me more and more of Bette Kane. A bit ditzy. Yet, her fighting skills were anything but.

"So, do you know?" I asked.

"Do I know what?"

I was beginning to sound like her. "Do you know who sired them? They mentioned something about a 'Master'."

She nodded. "The Master was the first one we got. He had this plan to reopen the Hellmouth, wreak death and destruction to the world. Usual stuff. After we stopped him, we couldn't account for two of his followers, Dillon and Joey. Mediocre jocks while on the Sunnydale Community College football team. Mostly into frat parties and binge drinking." She shrugged. "I guess becoming dead kind of went to their heads."

I swear I must've blinked in shock again. She sounded *so* matter-of-fact about everything.

She looked at me, realizing my incomprehension. She shrugged again. "They finally found something they could excel at: Binge drinking!"

The night was becoming noticeably lighter. Dawn was just a few minutes away. Time for Nightwing to make his exit.

"Hey, about that hotel," she began. "Never mind. I'll just take a cab to the airport and catch some 'z's' while I wait for my flight."

"What time's your flight?"

"Ten o'clock," she said, with a little wave good-bye.

I nodded.

"P.M.," she added.

"Definitely ditzy," I muttered, as she stepped into her cab.

The End

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End
file.